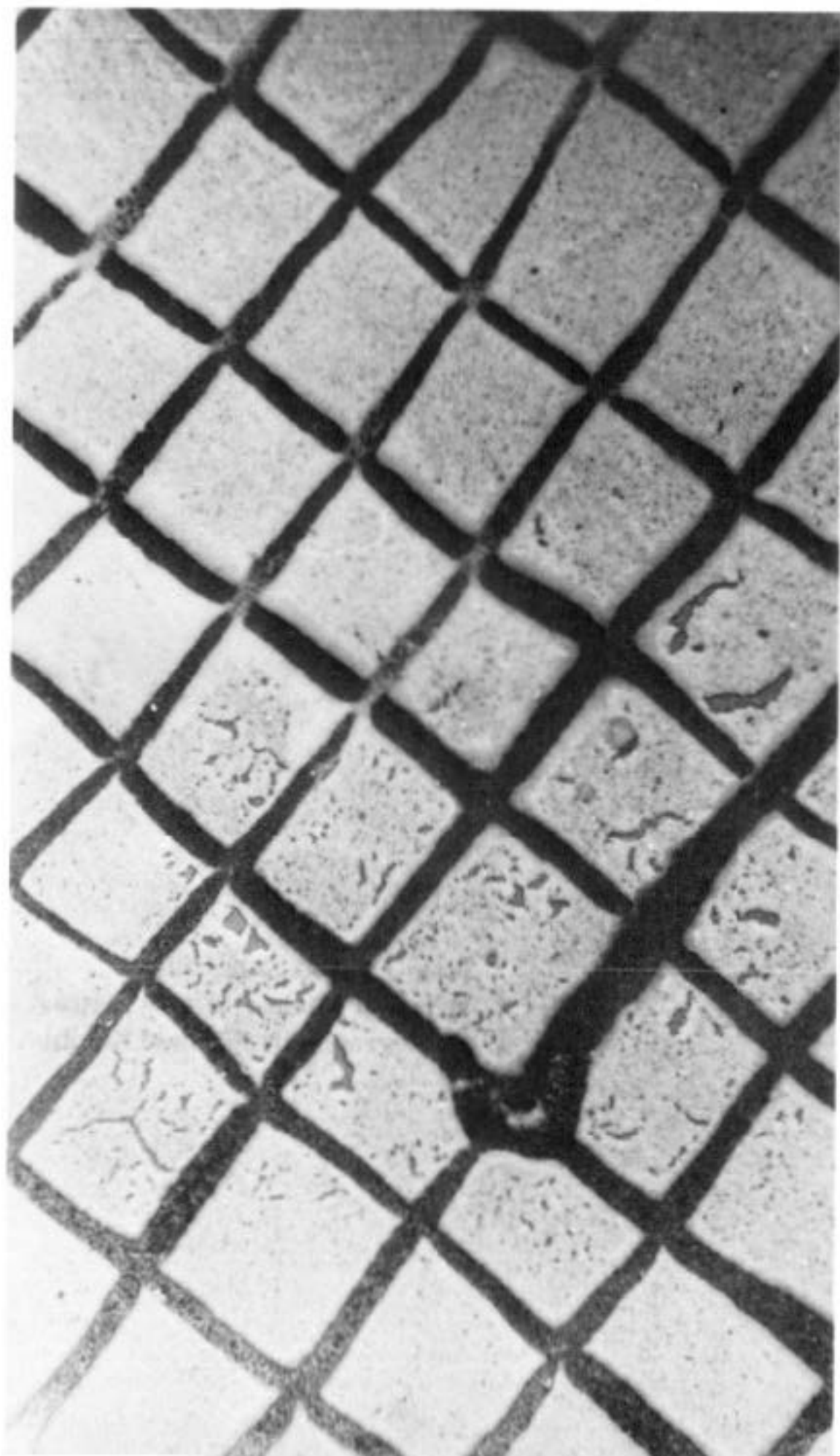


WESTERN POTTER



Cover ...

from Hycroft Sale, 1968.

Detail of Michael Henry platter.

Photography by Michael Kemble.

to the lexicographer: pott er, n. Maker of earthenware vessels; --'s wheel, horizontal revolving disk in --'s lathe (machine for moulding clay); --'s asthma, bronchitis, etc. (caused by dust in the pottery industry). OE potere (-ER)

pott er y, n. Earthenware; potter's work or workshop; the P--ies, district in N. Staffordshire, seat of --y industry. f. F poterie (POT, -ERY).

to Reg Dixon's students at the Vancouver School of Art:

pottery is - active meditation
- involvement
- psycho-ceramics
- finger foreplay
- controlled abandon
- here and now
- pleurez et recommencez
- serene open awareness
- pot for art's sake
- fire power
- mother earth in motion

The March issue of *Tactile* was kind enough to publish a short piece I wrote entitled, "Contemporary Criteria in Pottery". It seemed to affect quite a number of people in different ways. A few of these were moved to object. Two, Bob Bozak whose protest was published in the May issue, and Jack Sures, published in July, were basically on the same ground; although there was some difference in the points made and arguments offered, it seems to make sense to answer them jointly. And I certainly do want to answer them.

The primary objection really appears to arise out of their desire to retain the present criteria unchanged. This is understandable; excellence and professional competence within a style or trend is hard to develop and takes years. (An attachment for, and defence of, the status quo is perfectly natural. But this does not guarantee the validity of the status quo). The fact that a person displays excellence within the framework of a particular set of criteria only proves that that person is an excellent potter. If the criteria are inadequate then the pottery produced will be of lesser ultimate worth than would otherwise have been possible.

The key point which both objections share hinges upon the notion that intuition is some sort of non-rational inspiration; which is, quite simply, wrong. Intuition is no mystery; the meaning, grounding and validity of the term is well known and well defined both philosophically and psychologically. Intuition is that form of rational comprehension reached directly through experience, when confronting an observable fact. This is to be contrasted with such awarenesses as require deduction or analysis for comprehension. Unfortunately, the word intuition is often misused simply as a means of attempting to justify a whimsy; in this context it is given a mystic connotation and is intended to imply that rational evaluation should not be used in this particular case. A whimsy is a determination of some sort, which cannot be defended by any rational means. It is important to realize that rationality is the criterion which distinguishes true intuition from whimsy.

The important point which both objections seem to miss, was that I was not proposing a return to any set of past criteria. In fact the essential ground of my original article was an objection to the mindless rigidity which has elevated whimsy to the status of an absolute criterion. Today, in a society which has come to worship the "cult of Personality" we have developed a preoccupation with neurosy in all its forms. Among the symptoms common to all forms of neurosy are the bizarre, irrelevance of habitual behavior. When this appears as a pot we applaud its novelty, approve it as a manifestation of some personality, and award prizes for uniqueness. Now, if what we are concerned with is mental health, this process may have some Freudian justification, but it has nothing to do with pots.

Mr. Bozak's idea of "pursuing ourselves through a media like clay" - sounds as messy as it is. And Mr. Sures' notion of Art as some sort of communication suggests at best an improper marriage between McLuhan and a society desperate to have its trivialities taken seriously. Now, because we have electricity and machines, anarchy can at last be justified. We don't have to think any more, all we have to do is act, feel, respond with immediacy, exist. Our credentials are guaranteed and any criticism is automatically improper!

It is not simply the feelings, anguish, or idiosyncracies of an age which issue in its art. These things give rise only to the curios and artifacts, which allow us to see and understand its weaknesses. Art expresses its aspirations and its excellences. By its art we can learn to see its strengths.

In my original article I was pleading for such criteria as might give us an art. I would object and do object to past criteria, traditionalism, any other nostalgic references, together with such inappropriate substitutes for evaluation as I have mentioned above. Once again may I repeat Art has nothing to do with self discovery, self expression, or any other form of therapy. Only commercial art can be concerned with propaganda currently called communication, or any other sort of expression of transient social convictions. I am concerned with Art, not artifacts.

When I refer to criteria I am obviously not talking about a particular set of rules. My critics appear to have equated the notion of criteria with the idea of rules. In fact what they are advocating is a particular set of rules. These are social, psychological and political and they are a set. The rigidity of the contemporary doctrine that "everything goes" is as inflexible as that endorsed by any academy in history, and a good deal less defensible.

What we need is a concern with discovering extensions to our concept of form; not forgetting that any useful concept of form implies a system of ordering and a set of consistencies, but it is a new and broader concept that we need, and this in turn must entail new relationships of color and texture; perhaps wholly new concepts of purpose. In short, by criteria I intend some things far more universal than our social problems of the moment or private adventures in self discovery. I am suggesting that it is not essential that art be amongst the first victims of egalitarianism and a commitment to the "consensus".

Kay Whatmough

DE POTTENBAKKER

Aart van der Leeuw.

Translation: Henk van Amstel.

The master says give to the bowl the shape of a loaf of bread.
Why use a fine goblet as a simple vessel cupped in the hollow of the
 hand will equally quench the thirst
Allow as only ornament for your jar the generous curving of a
 smooth belly
Heavy is the burden of life, earnest; the good things of life go always
 with the blood and sweat of men.
Take care that formed in a sober shape the simplest bowl receives
 those bitter fruits,
But when I sit working at my window, and in the frame of the window
 pane fields and sky delight me by their mighty picture, the
 daisies sparkling in the meadow, swallows dashing swift arabesques
 from cloud to cloud, the butterflies unfolding the mystic
 marvels of their patterns etched diamond against sapphire;

Then my finger trembles while the wheel is turning and the shining liquid pours over the lump of clay -

Unconsciously I press the soft clay into calyces like the flowers of the meadow and thin and slender swells aloft the neck like a bird flying upward whistling in the sky. In the sprightly whirls I musingly make, hover butterflies in silent talk, while finally under my fine pencil I steal the blue shade of the sky.

Only when the finished pot stands before me in all its refinement - Alas, then I think of the master and his advice.

Designing and Constructing an Electric Kiln -- for less than \$120
by John Gregg.

Two years ago, for a thesis on a Fine Arts Course at U. B. C., I built an electric kiln which could be fired to cone 8. I wanted a top loading kiln to get around the door and hinge problem and I thought that a round kiln would eliminate bending elements through sharp angles. Tentatively I planned each ring as twelve 9" firebricks with their corners cut, strapped in a circle of inside diameter 24". The elements would fit in each ring, there would be eight rings and the kiln would be adjustable to a variety of heights. Then I found out a little about the electrical part of the kiln and I realized that I had been planning a sculpture out of firebrick rather than an operable kiln.

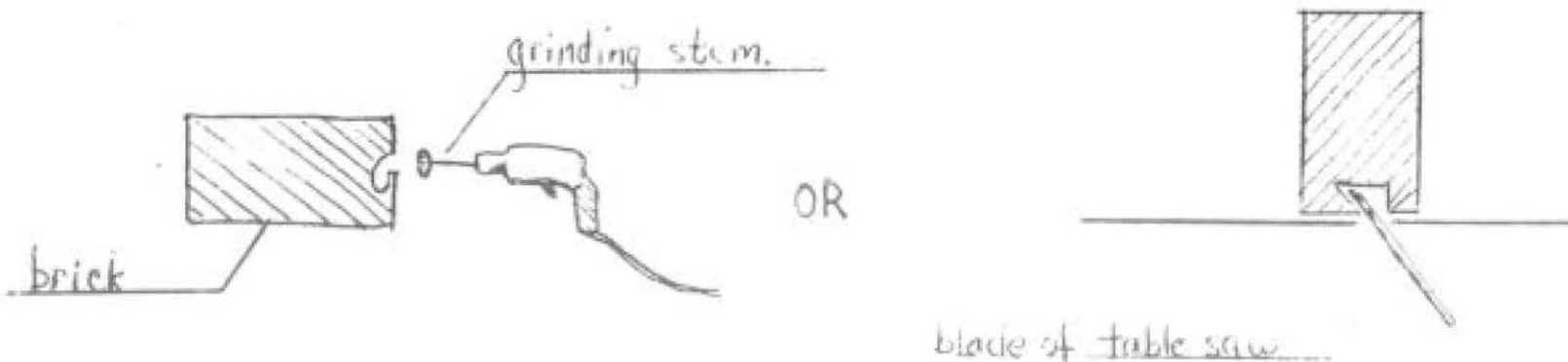
Glenn Lewis, my pottery instructor, introduced me to Michael Kemble who showed me the kiln that he had built and loaned me his kiln building pamphlet -- Pamphlet EVL-S-1008 by the Kenthal Corporation, Bethel, Connecticut. This contains the formulae for the kilowattage per cubic foot of kiln, wire diameter, and size of mandrel to use when winding the elements. I had to change my design as 220 v. would not heat the chamber to cone 8. The kiln was now re-designed as 6 rings high with an element in each ring.

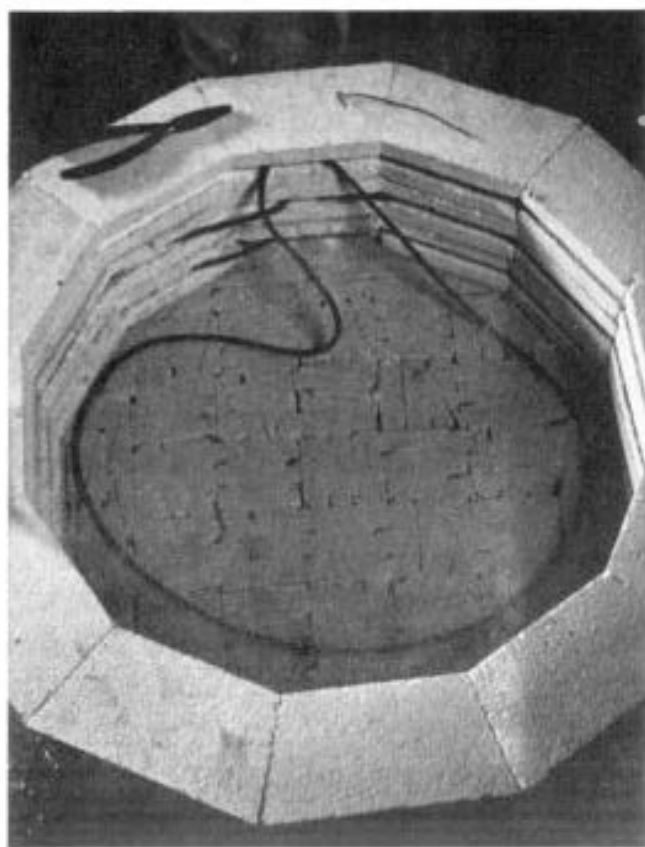
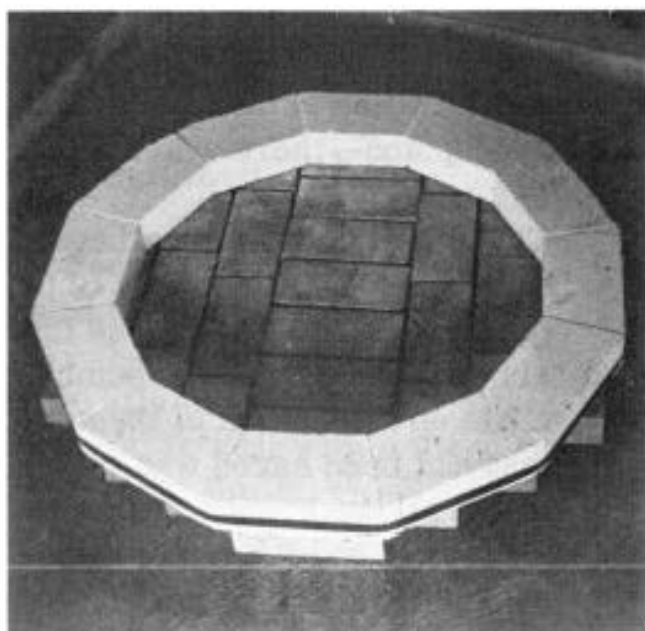
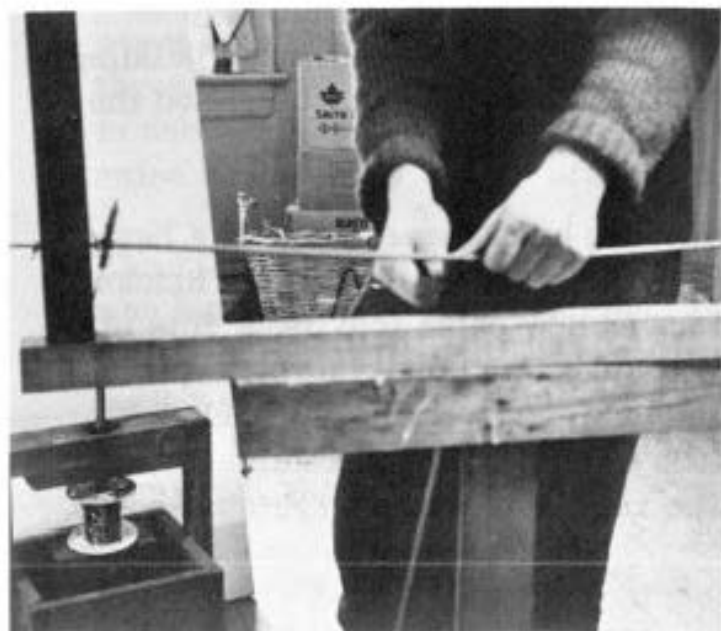
For less than \$120 I purchased 125 of the best firebricks, 410 ft. of #17 A-1 wire, one carborundum disc (blade), borrowed 6 ft. of 3/16" cold rolled steel for a mandrel and rented a table saw. This last was my first blunder as a table saw does not give enough blade clearance so that one has to make two cuts whereas an overhead radial arm saw

can complete the cutting operation in one stroke. I cut 72° of each end of 100 firebricks (see photo 2), grooved them, and then restacked them in their boxes with the chaffing strips--as they are very fragile. All end cuts were saved as well as the useable powdered firebrick. There was a surprising amount of this powder all over me, the saw, and the backyard where I had had the sense to do the cutting.

The elements were wound on a $3/16''$ cold rolled steel rod--I later found that they should have been wound on a $3/16''$ hardwood dowel as elements should never touch steel. As a frame for winding the elements, two two-by-fours were braced against the ceiling in my apartment at about $4-1/2'$ apart. A $3/16''$ hole was drilled in each one at about waist height. The rod was passed through the holes and a hand operated wood drill was applied to one end of the rod. The contraption resembled a medieval ox-spit. Miss Anna K. Hill supplied the motive power on the drill and the element wire was clamped to the rod with a 2" C-clamp. The spool of 410 feet of wire was placed on a peg which allowed it to turn freely. My right hand was curled around the wire and my left hand was curled around the rod, both thumbs applied even pressure to the wire--after a few false starts we were having enormous success. (See photo 1).

The bricks were taken to a packing and shipping company where the sets of twelve bricks were fastened into a unit with strapping iron. Then, later, at home I squatted inside the rings and ruined my $3/8''$ drill by grinding a gutter in each element groove inside each ring of bricks. This could have been done previously with a table saw by simply tilting the blade.

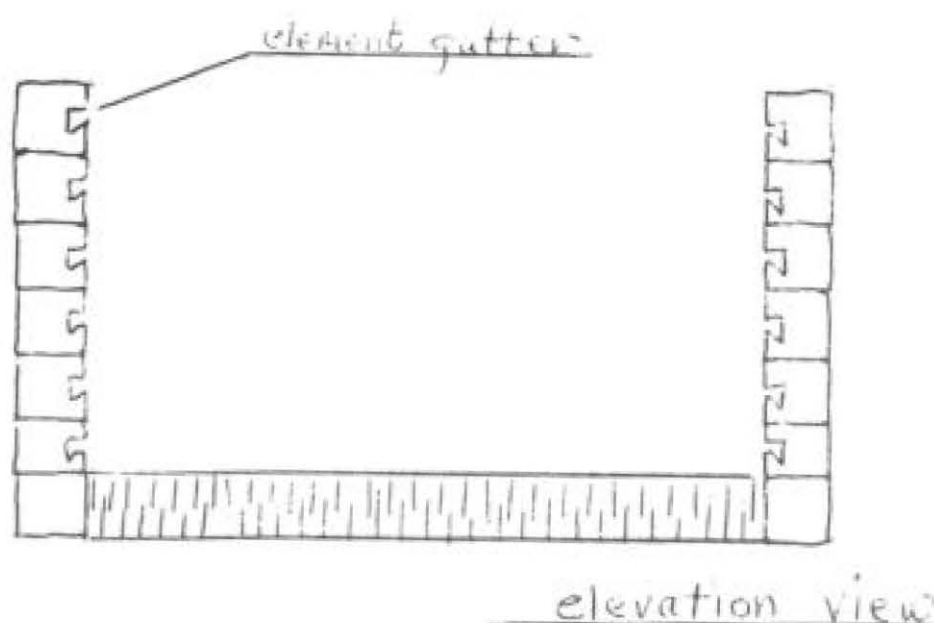




One problem I faced was to find a permanent home for the kiln. Miss Gathie Falk provided a concrete floored garage which she intended to convert into a pottery. I stripped the wiring out of a condemned building and installed it there. My brother Karl, the electrician, completed the hookup and--there was still a month before the thesis was due.

The actual construction began. Twenty-six bricks were used as a base to support the kiln. One 12 brick ring was placed on the base of bricks (photo 2). The end-pieces that I had saved now came into use. Sets of six end-pieces were assembled to form blocks and the kiln floor was made up of several of these blocks (photo 3). The powdered firebrick that had been saved was mixed with kiln wash (silica and kaolin: 50/50) to fill all the cracks in this floor. The remaining rings were stacked up.

The elements were now stretched from their closely wound 42" to slightly longer than 84". This was the circumference of the element groove. They were stretched slightly longer to press them against the outside of the channel as loose elements are not satisfactory. When elements are heated they become quite limp and can roll out of grooves unless there is a channel to retain them. Each element terminal was drawn through a hole in its ring wall by means of a stiff wire hook. (photo 4) and then connected to a fuse in a six fuse box--to put each element on one must switch off the main switch, screw in the appropriate fuse, then switch on the main power supply. This is rather ungainly, but it works.



The lid is like something from a Vincent Price movie--and there is a great deal of room for improvement. It is a 29 brick plug, with 5-16" threaded rods running through it so to stiffen it. This plug is inserted in another 12 brick ring. Three lifting hooks and a block and tackle raise and lower it. This structure could be simplified.

The kiln worked--it fired to cone 8, not just once but many times. It was not expensive to operate and I soon found that it would reach cone 8 on five elements only. Then Charmian Johnson and Gathie Falk built a gas kiln in the same garage. Now my kiln is their bisquit kiln, its life has been extended indefinitely as cone 08 is well within the elements' reach whereas cone 8 was close to their limits.

Mistakes are things to learn from and sometimes with the addition of a few years become something which can be remembered in passing and then laughed or wept at and forgotten. Of course, I met the man who had the answers to my questions - and more - only after the kiln was built. He told me never to let steel touch elements, wind them on wood, wash elements with detergent after handling them to remove sweaty fingermarks which cause corrosion, install elements wearing gloves, double twist terminals, always look at the firebricks you buy through a magnifying glass. David Lambert told me that, he is an expert on kiln building, and other things.

LETTERS

Gillian Hodge sends the following letter about her visit to England. Even though she has been back for a few months, and many members will have heard her tell about her adventures, I am sure that this lively reminiscence will be of interest. (Ed.)

England, I'm glad to report, is still around; despite the world's most lethal traffic and the shortest mini skirts - any young man wishing to study should travel now.

The Henry Moore retrospective - though not, I suppose, relevant here - is an experience of a lifetime. No photograph gives an adequate impression of the presence, the gravity,

the power of some of these incredible objects. One greets old friends only to find new subtleties, new vistas, new intimacies - some seem suddenly intricate or the texture of the surfaces important. Nor was I prepared for the powerful sexuality of the forms which had previously seemed more rock than human. The one that overwhelmed me completely was Three Rings in red Sorya marble, the stone hollowed and carved in strong ellipses through which one saw, from different angles, the cut forms of the other rings. Yet the overlying simplicity of the shapes was not lost in the multiplicities. The marble itself was beautiful, coloured in rich reds, ochres, bronzes with a sensuous surface which invited the hand.

A department store gallery had an exhibition of the St. Ives group which was to prove the hors d'oeuvres before the feast. It was a crowded scene where it was difficult to isolate anything but Bernard Leach's pots were there, serene and quiet. Janet Leach's seemed almost defiantly her own - I particularly enjoyed a small oval bottle of a rich, warm clay with the glaze sliding down the shoulder.

Covent Garden next, where sliding over orange peel, rotten peaches and other local colour, we found the Crafts Centre - an ex-warehouse with an interesting display. There was a great deal of honest crockery, well made, functional, solidly craftsmanlike but I was more interested in the obvious movement away from all this to a more sculptural approach. The pebble shapes of Lewiston, Collyer; Gordon Baldwins' use of brilliant shiny back glazes on matt black clay; Tony Hepburn's colourful glazes on tight hard shapes; Ian Auld's austere rectangles; John Chalkes' exciting use of raku.

I then tackled the underground and found my way (via Habitat, which must be the world's most exciting shop) to Primavera. Here I saw a massive pot by Ruth Duckworth and another by Janet Leach, the clay of both stained and rubbed; Lucy Ries' delicate, intellectual pots that when I saw more in St. Ives had an enormous appeal; and a couple of John Reeves' thrown and cut containers. So far I had been a lot more excited than I had

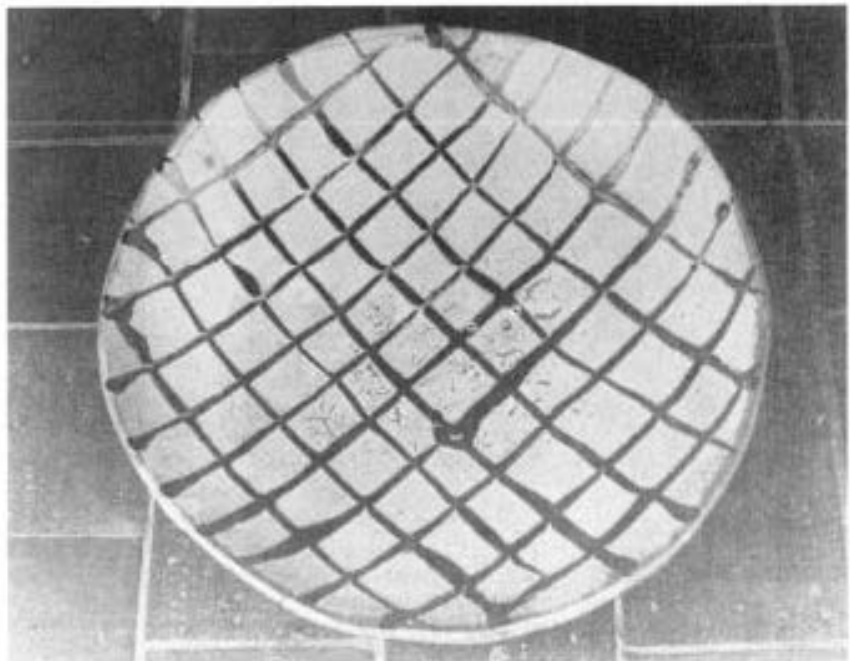
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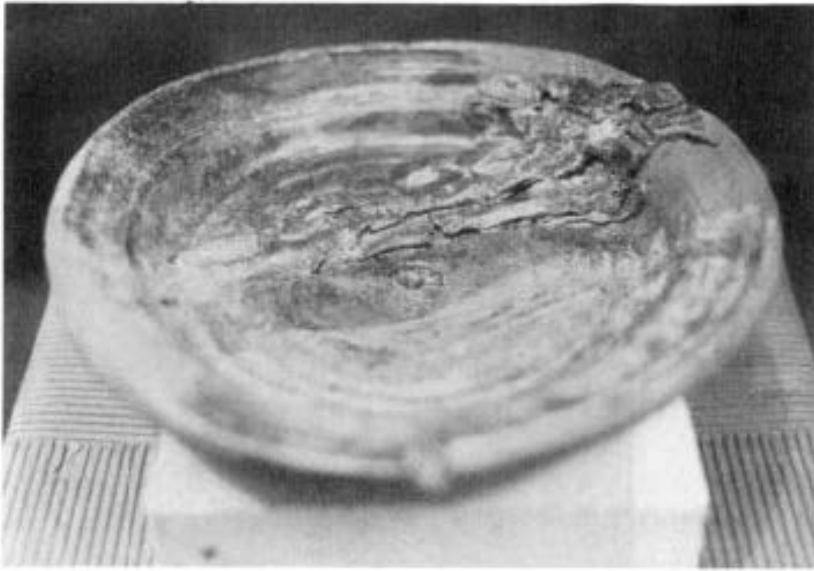
HYCROFT
EXHIBITION
POTTERY

Stoneware jar.
Ruth Meechan



Stoneware platter.
Michael Henry

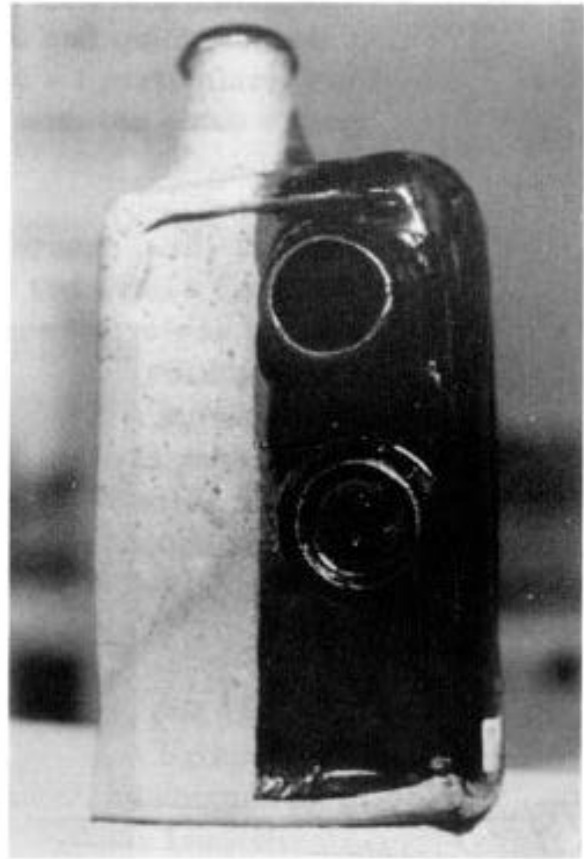




Raku plate.
Gillian Hodge



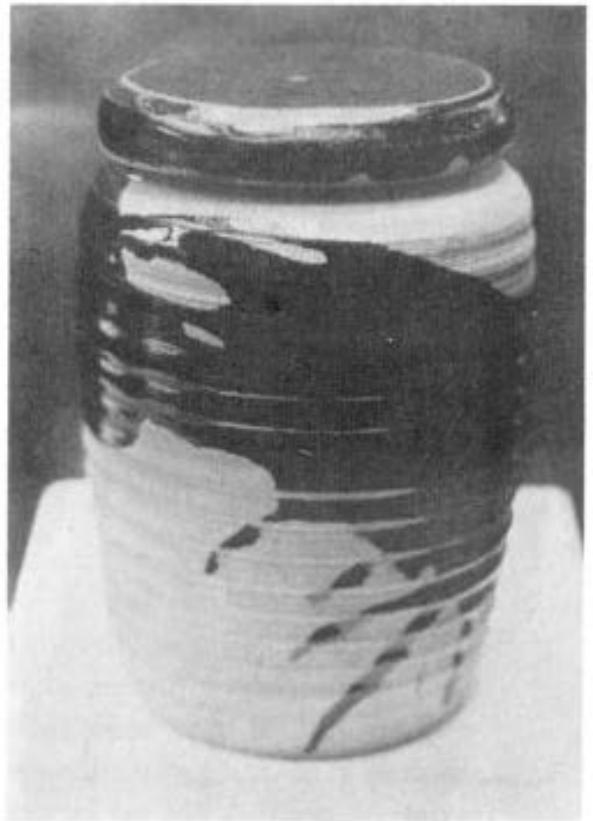
Stoneware bottle
Don Hutchinson



Stoneware bottle
Bonnie McGraw



Stoneware bottle
Tam Irving.



Stoneware covered jar
Larry Cohen.



Stoneware lidded pot.
M. Campbell



Stoneware lidded jar
Judy Clegg.

expected to be, though the pottery, with exceptions, had yet to match the flowering of furniture design.

We arrived in St. Ives in time for the opening of the exhibitions that marked the occasion of the conferring of the Freedom of the Borough on Bernard Leach and Barbara Hepworth. The main exhibit was in the Guildhall and to arrive and see these pots quietly waiting was a crowning experience - and to return to them again and again in the next days. There is a ripeness about them: some redolent of fruit in their shape, full and perfect before the first frost; austere and delicate porcelain, with an occasional pattern of delicate colour; stern, strong bowls, the sides cut; a favourite pressed bottle, repeated and decorated in a variety of ways. The glazes flow across the forms, perfecting, deleting nothing. The lines of foot to shoulder leap - nothing scamped or withheld; the relationship of lip-belly-foot is perfect and utterly satisfying. These pots have a serenity, a quality of profound rest.

When we went to the pottery someone asked Bernard Leach how to tell a good pot and he said, simply, that a good pot has the qualities of a good man - honesty, simplicity, joy, sincerity; I should add "serenity" and I think you have the man and his pots.

There is, I think, a slight anti-Leach movement - perhaps a healthy thing. I feel myself that there is no one way to make pots and much interesting work is being done, obscured by his shadow. But there can be no doubt of the debt we owe him, not only people like myself, whose entire life was changed by his influence, but all contemporary potters, since without him the modern pottery movement would not exist and he is the strong link that binds us to our past as potters and also to our future as artists.

And it was in search of that past that I spent a day at the British Museum - one could spend a lifetime there and there is only one way to see any one part of the joint - borrow a pair of horse blinkers; look straight ahead and march resolutely forward. Alas I had none and so it was via the Lindesferne gospels and the first editions of Alice in Wonderland and Beatrix Potter that I finally reached the Far Eastern dept.

Here one can trace out the development of Chinese ceramics from the earliest time to the flowery decadence. My own method is to take a rapid tour, uttering squeaks of joy, and then to return more soberly to the objects that one has inevitably chosen - and finally to return to savour the forms that seem to breathe the essence of the potter's art - exquisite Sung porcelain; austere jars rising from the foot to a high full shoulder; a bull, massive, masculine; a T'ang lady in all her grace and femininity; a great Tzu Chu bottle pressed and decorated; a round pot with relaxed brushwork across the shoulder.

And it was here that one could see the essential differences of Japanese and Korean pottery. A delightful collection of teabowls and tea jars from Japan, their earthy colours and rich, warm glazes a perfect contrast to the interlectualities of China - a great rough Sigaraki rice jar, the ash glaze sliding down one side leaving the clay rich, pitted, a delight to the eye. Korean pots, relaxed, with cut sides and free brush marks.

And then the medieval jugs from England with their naive simplicity - I thoroughly enjoyed the casually thumbled bases, the round handles pierced in patterns, the simple, satisfying shapes. No photograph had ever given me the scale of the huge slipware dishes - they are monumental and the rich glazes with the warmth of the slips came as a delight.

I think I had better spare you the joys of the South American collections; the long ceramic history of Egypt - even that blue hippo - the galleries of Greece and Etruscan pots, but I can't forget the utterly unexpected pleasures of the early Saxon pots - great homely earthenware, collared, scratched, incised and stamped, burnt black and dark brown.

One fact - the world has been full of enthusiastic potters since time began - and there are no new ideas or shapes - and still lots to say.

Gas Kiln Building?

A useful booklet published by the American Craftsmen's Council--is Paul Soldner's Kiln Construction.

American Craftsmen's Council, 29 West 53rd St., New York.

A POTTERY STUDIO AT THE BURNABY ART CENTRE

Burnaby is about to enter a new level of activity in the field of ceramics. There has been a group of people who, for the past year, have been working toward the establishment of a Pottery Studio at the Burnaby Art Centre and now their hard work is paying off. The studio is nearing completion and classes will soon begin. The classes will be at all levels from beginning to advanced and the studio will be made available as workshop time several times a week. The studio is a renovated old building that is part of the Ceperly Estate which is now the Burnaby Art Centre.

It is hoped that the classes will begin the week of Jan. 27th and shortly thereafter we will build a kiln in the studio. The kiln will be a two chambered, down draft, cantinary arch and its construction will be offered as a workshop so interested persons can attend and learn from the event.

For further information about the studio or classes contact Byron Johnstad at 298-4218 or 526-5782.

DISTRICT NEWS: (The Western Potter would appreciate news from other districts in B. C.).

Report to the Western Potter from the Okanagan Valley

Two successful show sales have recently been held in the Okanagan. The first comprised the work of "Five Potters" including G. Tillapaugh of Kelowna, Frank Poll of Vernon, Des Loane of Summerland, B. Kingsmill of Kelowna and F. Hatfield of Oyama. The second, a one-man show by F. Hatfield, was held in the Vernon Civic Art Gallery in

conjunction with an exhibition of water colours by P. Mackie. Public interest and awareness is definitely increasing in our area thanks to such shows as these.

Report by Des Loane on his new studio at Peachland, B.C.

"I've built a studio to my liking without any particular regard for what a pottery should be. You might say the theory is that if the environment of production is right then what can be wrong? This is also the practice.

I've been fortunate in qualifying under the 'Incentive Act of the Federal Government Area Development Agency'; the Okanagan being an area which qualifies under the Act. All of which means that in setting up a production area I will receive a grant in proportion to my investment.

The studio is located at Peachland on Highway 97 and on the shore of Okanagan Lake, opposite Rattlesnake Island, all part of the favourable environment. I will fire with an Alpine gas kiln in addition to my electric one. As in the past, I will continue to pot for people and not for potters, and in that same spirit my goal is to make pottery available to people, not just privileged people."

CANADIAN CRAFTSMAN'S ASSOCIATION

The Canadian Craftsman's Association recently held an executive meeting in Toronto. The most important item on the agenda was the brief relating to the relief of excise tax and sales tax as it affects Canadian Craftsmen. The brief was put in its final form and will shortly be presented to the Government. It was decided that since this brief is of relevance to the Canadian Guild of Potters and the Canadian Guild of Crafts, the Association has decided the best way to implement its proposals was through joint sponsorship. This was discussed by Mr. Herb Bunt of the Canadian Guild of Potters and Mr. H. Voden of the Canadian Guild of Crafts.

Other areas of discussion included a look at our publication 'Craftsman-L'Artisan', its future formal and editorial policies. Sheila Stiven as editor was commended for her fine job. She indicated that future issues would be of even higher quality and content. (Those interested in

receiving copies of this quarterly publication and supporting the Canadian Craftsman's Association should contact the Association at Box 2431, Station D., Ottawa, Ontario). Plans for the biennial meeting were discussed and the time and place should be announced shortly.

Jack Sures, President,
Canadian Craftsman's Association.

AWARDS

Members are reminded that they are responsible for notifying the editor of any prizes or rewards they receive.

1. Canadian Guild of Crafts Competition at C. N. E. - 1968.

Awards in Ceramics:-

Best pottery in show:	Jack Sures, Regina
Best stoneware in show:	Jack Herman, Kleinburg, Ont.
Best earthenware in show:	Not awarded
Ceramic sculpture:	Robert Bozak, Toronto
Most interesting glaze:	Ron Roy, Scarborough, Ont.
Any ceramic entry, winner never won before:	Mrs Denyse Kearney, Montreal
Honourable mention:	Jack Sures, Regina D. T. Chester, Regina Marilyn Levine, Regina Leopold L. Foulem, Caraquet, N. B. John A. Porter, Calgary.

2. Hycroft Exhibition

This exhibition within the Hycroft sale was juried by Mr. Glenn Lewis. Nine pots were chosen. Photographs of these pots are on the centre pages of this magazine. Mr. Lewis chose pottery by:

M. Campbell; Judy Clegg; Larry Cohen; Michael Henry;
Gillian Hodge; Don Hutchinson; Tam Irving; Ruth Meehan;
Bonnie McGraw

CANADIAN ARTISTS 1968

This large exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario had one ceramic piece, "Last Supper, Dining Room Freshener", by Glenn Lewis of Vancouver. It was a porcelain, mirror, black and clear plexiglass combination.

WHERE TO EXHIBIT

Craft Dimensions Canada -- will be shown at the Royal Ontario Museum, September 23rd to November 2nd, 1969.

The exhibition will be sponsored by the Royal Ontario Museum, the Canadian Guild of Crafts (Ontario) and made possible by a grant from the Canada Council. Included in the presentation will be a juried show of contemporary Canadian crafts.

The exhibition committee of the Canadian Guild of Crafts (Ontario) will be in charge of receiving and jurying the entries. The Royal Ontario Museum will prepare the catalogue and will be responsible for the exhibition, once the entries are juried March 10th, 1969. Entry forms will be mailed in December 1968.

The members of the jury will be:

Mr. Glen Kaufman, Assist. Professor of Art,
University of Georgia.

Mr. Ron Pearson, Professional Craftsman, Partner in "Shop 1"
Rochester, New York.

Mr. Robert Turner, Professor of Ceramics, State University of
New York, College of Ceramics, Alfred, New York.

For further information contact: Miss Viola Harris, Executive Secretary,
Canadian Guild of Crafts,
77 Bloor St. W., Toronto 5, Ont.

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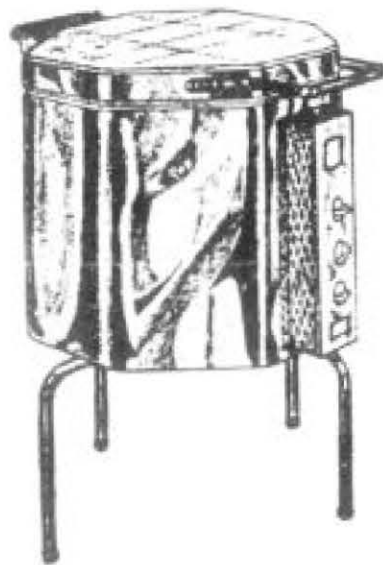
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Peter Grossman,
1165 Mathers Ave.,
West Vancouver, B. C.

(Membership Fees: \$5.00 ... Lower Mainland & Fraser Valley Area
\$3.00 ... Other areas)

"QUAGMIRE" potter's wheel

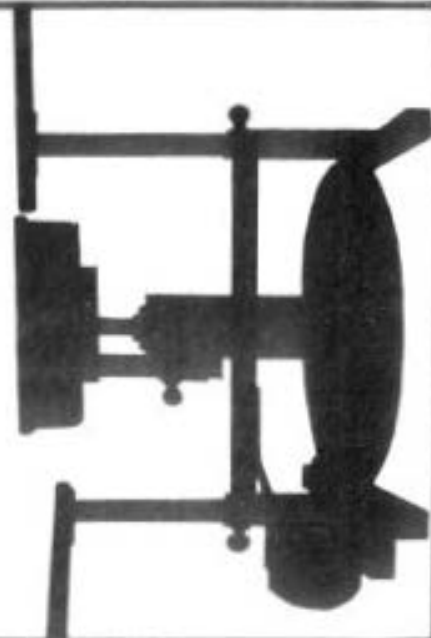
FEATURES: an all steel welded frame, plastic finish, spun aluminum pan, solid cold roll steel shaft, removable 65lb steel flywheel, aluminum 12" wheelhead with 1" spaced concentric rings, 1725 rpm heavy duty sealed ball bearing 1/4 hp motor 1 yr guarantee, sturdy friction clutch, grounded wiring, self aligning sealed replaceable greaseable ball bearings.

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